

*Supply—National Defence*

back in 1951 when I first came to this house. It has taken a long time to get that type of proven assistance for the fighting infantry soldiers incorporated into our army. However, we have reached that stage finally.

There were a few helicopters being used by the brigade in Europe when I was there three years ago for the purpose of reconnaissance. What further work has been done in this regard to improve the mobility of that brigade? Is its supply column still a wheeled column tied to the roads of Belgium and France? We have gone through two world wars with our supply columns tied to those roads. Where is the plan that the minister should have to make this brigade completely mobile by the use of tracked supply vehicles or an air lift? We have not heard from the minister in that regard, yet he would give the impression that because armoured personnel carriers have been provided for that brigade it is now completely mobile. It is not and will not be completely mobile, from the point of view of a supply column, until it is furnished with either tracked vehicles or an air lift for that purpose.

Some years ago the minister talked about the fact that we were not purchasing Otters, Beavers or Caribou from de Havilland but we were getting planes from the United States. Would any of those or other types made by that company be available for an air lift? What about the helicopter; is it being used as it is being used in Viet Nam, or is it being used for just reconnaissance purposes as it was when I was over there three years ago? Why do we not make the brigade in Europe completely mobile and extend that mobility to other formations we are training here in Canada? Are we just going to go on fighting the last war over again with wheeled vehicles tied to roads providing supplies of ammunition, food and other materials?

The minister should get active on this and live up to some of the things he suggested when he was sitting here on the opposition side. He does not even need a study group in this regard because there is plenty of experience available. If he thinks he needs more experience and advice why does he not send military observers to South Viet Nam to see how the United States airborne cavalry division operates in action?

The minister should find out the type of helicopter used in Viet Nam and how the chain of command is operated. When I suggested that he do this the other day he shielded himself behind the fact that we have

[Mr. Churchill.]

membership in the international joint commission in South Viet Nam. That is not a good enough excuse.

It has been pointed out, and the minister mentioned this in his speech last night, that the experienced officers and men who are survivors of the second world war are reaching retirement age and will be leaving the armed services soon. That is all the more reason for training younger men who have had no experience in warfare, other than those who were in Korea. They should be given the chance to see what warfare is like in South Viet Nam. Let them hear the sound of bursting shells and the whine of machine gun bullets. They could be kept safely out of the way in fox-holes or behind some kind of protection, but they should see what happens in battle and the effect of fire under battle conditions. Let them see how an army is supported under battle conditions.

In a very few years there will be virtually no one in our armed services who has had experience in actual warfare; yet it is essential, if lives are to be saved, that we have men with this experience. If our forces are committed to other than peace keeping duties, which perhaps involves little risk, it is essential that our officers and senior N.C.O.'s at least have some knowledge of how to look after troops under war conditions. That is why we should have observers to see what is being done in South Viet Nam. I do not suggest they risk their lives, but they should find out what is being done in South Viet Nam and bring that advice and experience back to our forces in training. Our forces must be kept to peak efficiency in the event of war.

There is no point in talking about national defence with the idea that there will not be a war. We all hope there will be no war, but I know of no period in the world's history when there has not been some kind of struggle taking place in which lives have been lost. Canada has had a long and difficult time in the 100 years of its history, with men of each generation engaged somewhere or other in warfare. I see no possibility of that situation being changed in the immediate future. This is unfortunate, but let us make sure that our forces are efficient. There is no point in telling us here that they are efficient, because they cannot be efficient unless there are senior officers and N.C.O.'s in our forces experienced in warfare. Under present-day circumstances we must have not only good and effective field training with good, effective modern